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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3476  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0011  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0039  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0016  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0087  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0023  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0022  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0477  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0020  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000415

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR P, EAP, EUR, NEA, PM, IO, AND NSC  
SINGAPORE ALSO FOR DAO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/16/2016  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [BX](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)  
SUBJECT: BRUNEI CONTINUES TO PLAN UNIFIL CONTRIBUTION, BUT  
WANTS MORE DETAIL ON ROE AND SCOPE OF MISSION

REF: A. (A) STATE 134133

[1](#)B. (B) USUN 1545

[1](#)C. (C) BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 398 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Emil Skodon, reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Government of Brunei (GOB) continues to plan contribution of a mechanized infantry company to UNIFIL and remains publicly committed to such a deployment in conjunction with Malaysian and/or Indonesian troops. Privately, GOB defense officials recognize the challenges that a Lebanon mission would pose for their largely untested troops, and tell us they want to see more details on the scope of UNIFIL's new mission and its revised ROE before making a final decision. Embassy recommends USUN New York encourage UN DPKO to invite Brunei UN Mission to August 17 meeting of UNIFIL Troop Contributing Countries, which will discuss CONOPS and ROE. Also recommend EAP and PM invite GOB's Washington Embassy to A/S Hillen's August 16 UNIFIL briefing; if opportunity arises, A/S Hillen should mention at that briefing that Brunei is considering a UNIFIL troop contribution, as such recognition will make it more difficult for the GOB to back away from the commitment to provide troops made by the Sultan to the OIC. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On August 15, prior to receipt of ref A demarche instructions, Ambassador asked Deputy Defense Minister Pehin Yasmin for update on GOB planning for its contribution to UNIFIL in wake of passage of UNSCR 1701 (Yasmin is de facto Defense Minister, since Brunei's Sultan retains the official title of Minister for himself). Ambassador noted GOB's consistent public line that it is committed to making good the Sultan of Brunei's pledge to provide troops to a Lebanon multinational force, in accordance with the statement made by the Sultan at the OIC Emergency Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on August 3, and reminded Yasmin of his previous comments to Ambassador that Brunei was looking at contributing a total of approximately 200 troops built around a mechanized infantry company, in conjunction with a Malaysian and/or Indonesian deployment (ref C).

[1](#)3. (C) Yasmin confirmed that Royal Brunei Armed Forces

(RBAF) were continuing to plan for deployment of a mechanized company to UNIFIL with Indonesian and/or Malaysian forces. The RBAF would hold a second high-level planning conference with counterparts from these neighboring countries this week or next. Yasmin, however, hedged when asked if UNSCR 1701 gave the GOB all the information it needed to make a final commitment. He said a final decision would be contingent on the mandate and rules of engagement given to the new UN force in Lebanon.

¶4. (C) Specifically, Yasmin said, the Ministry of Defense and RBAF wanted to know whether any troops it committed would be "peacekeepers" or "peacemakers." The former mission they could handle, but the latter would be problematical. Telling the Ambassador "Don't quote me on this," Yasmin continued by saying that the GOB did not want to send its troops on a "suicide mission." Ambassador pointed out to Yasmin that the mandate for the new UNIFIL was spelled out in some detail in UNSCR 1701. Yasmin acknowledged this, but repeated that the GOB wanted to see the new ROE for UNIFIL and more details on its mandate before making a final commitment.

¶5. (C) Following receipt of ref A demarche instructions on August 16, Ambassador delivered talking points to Yasmin and to Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister II Pehin Lim, and urged them to ensure that Brunei's UN Mission in New York attend the DPKO briefing on August 17 at which UNIFIL ROE would be discussed per ref B.

¶6. (C) Comment: Yasmin's caution is not unreasonable given the RBAF's lack of PKO experience outside its immediate neighborhood in Southeast Asia. The fact remains, however, that the Sultan is on record as having made a political

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commitment to the OIC to join Malaysia and/or Indonesia if they contribute troops to UNIFIL, and failure to carry through would be a significant loss of face. We expect the Sultan's commitment will trump practical concerns within the MOD and RBAF, and if Malaysia or Indonesia contribute troops to UNIFIL, the GOB will find it hard not to join them. End Comment.

¶7. (C) Action Recommendation -- USUN: Embassy recommends that USUN New York encourage DPKO to invite Brunei's UN Mission to send a representative to August 17 briefing for UNIFIL Troop Contributing Countries so that it can report details on proposed ROE and CONOPS back to its capital.

¶8. (C) Action Recommendation -- Department: Embassy recommends PM and EAP ensure that Brunei Embassy Washington is invited to A/S Hillen's August 16 briefing on UNIFIL force generation. If the opportunity arises, Brunei should be specifically named as one of those countries that has publicly expressed interest in a UNIFIL contribution, in order to underscore that the Sultan's commitment has been widely noted and that we hope it will be fulfilled.  
SKODON